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 Document Number: 1981BUENOS06537

Page: 1

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 06537 081653Z  
 ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 IO-15  
 NSC-05 NSAE-00 SY-05 HA-06 PM-09 MCT-02 SYE-00  
 SP-02 SPRS-02 /088 W

-----376550 081830Z /44

P 081601Z SEP 81  
 FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0851  
 INFO USMISSION USUN NY  
 USCINCSO QUARRY HTS

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ( ) In Part ☒ In Full

( ) Classify as ( ) Extend as ( ) Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 6537

E.O. 12065: XDS-1 9/8/2001 (FRIEDMAN, T.B.) OR-P  
 TAGS: SHUM AR  
 SUBJECT: KIDNAPPING ENDS WITH MEN FREED

REF: BUENOS AIRES 6526

1. (U) JULIO BARBARO AND JUAN GALLEGO, KIDNAPPED WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, WERE FREED BY THEIR CAPTORS 55 HOURS LATER IN DOWNTOWN BUENOS AIRES. THE TWO MEN WERE UNABLE TO IDENTIFY THE MEN WHO HELD THEM. THEY REPORTED THAT THEY WERE QUESTIONED EXTENSIBLY ABOUT POLITICAL ISSUES AND EXCEPT FOR A FEW BLOWS NOT ILL TREATED DURING THEIR CAPTIVITY. BARBO TOLD THE PRESS THAT HE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THE KIDNAPPERS WERE WORKING AGAINST RATHER THAN FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

2. (U) THE GOA ISSUED A STATEMENT SEPTEMBER 4 ANNOUNCING ITS "DEEP CONCERN" OVER THE KIDNAPPINGS AND ITS DETERMINATION TO INVESTIGATE THE CASE WITH "URGENCY AND DEDICATION." THE PRESS SEPTEMBER 4 AND 5 ALSO REPORTED THAT THE USG HAD EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE CASE, ASKING THE EMBASSY FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE KIDNAPPING. THIS ITEM WAS APPARENTLY BASED IN AN AFP REPORT DATED LINED WASHINGTON AND QUOTING A "HIGH-LEVEL

PAGE 02 BUENOS 06537 081653Z

STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL." IN ADDITION, "CLARIN" ON SEPTEMBER 6 REPORTED THAT AMBASSADOR KIRKPATRICK

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 1

Current Class: [REDACTED]  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1981BUENOS06537

Page: 2  
Channel: n/a

"PERSONALLY CALLED THE U.S. EMBASSY IN BUENOS AIRES TO LEARN ABOUT THE EPISODE."

3. [REDACTED] COMMENT: THE GOA IS CONVINCED THAT THE KIDNAPPINGS WERE THE WORK OF FAR RIGHT ELEMENTS OUT TO EMBARRASS AND WEAKEN VIOLA. ON SEPTEMBER 4 BEFORE THE RELEASE OF THE TWO MEN, FOREIGN MINISTER CAMILION TOLD AMBASSADORS SHLAUDEMAN AND GENERAL WALTERS THAT THE KIDNAPPINGS WERE A "PROVOCATION" AIMED AT THE VIOLA GOVERNMENT. PRESIDENT VIOLA, HE SAID, WAS USING EVERY RESOURCE TO IDENTIFY THE KIDNAPPERS AND APPREHEND THEM. CAMILION SAID HE FEARED, THOUGH, THAT THE VICTIMS WERE ALREADY DEAD. IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION, ONE OF CAMILION'S AIDES TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT VIOLA ASSERTED HE WANTED TO USE THIS INCIDENT TO END THE "IMPUNITY" WHICH ALLOWED SECTORS OF THE SECURITY SERVICES TO CARRY OUT SUCH OPERATIONS.

4. [REDACTED] IN FACING THE FAR RIGHT, THE GOVERNMENT IS ANXIOUS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE USG HARBORS NO SYMPATHY FOR THE ACTION OF THAT FACTION. THUS, WE BELIEVE THAT CAMILION OR SOMEONE ELSE HIGH UP IN THE GOA LEAKED TO CLARIN THE FACT OF AMBASSADOR KIRKPATRICK'S CALL. IN A SIMILAR VEIN, AND FOR A SIMILAR REASON, CAMILION WENT OUT OF HIS WAY DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE WHILE IN WASHINGTON TO UNDERLINE THAT THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION CONTINUE TO SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS AND MOVEMENT TOWARD DEMOCRACY, ALBEIT BY DIFFERENT MEANS THAN ITS PREDECESSOR.

5. [REDACTED] WE TOO BELIEVE THAT THE KIDNAPPINGS WERE THE WORK OF SOME ELEMENT IN THE SECURITY FORCES OPERATING [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

PAGE 03 BUENOS 06537 081653Z

IN BEHALF OF VIOLA'S RIGHT-WING OPPOSITION. THE RELEASE, ALIVE AND WELL, OF THE TWO MEN IS MORE THAN SOME, INCLUDING THE FOREIGN MINISTER, EXPECTED. THAT IS THE GOOD NEWS. IT MAY BE THAT THE VIGOROUS REACTION OF THE GOVERNMENT, BACKED IT WOULD SEEM BY THE ARMY, FORCES THE CAPTORS TO SURRENDER THEIR VICTIMS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE KIDNAPPERS MAY HAVE INTENDED ONLY TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR "IMP FITY" IN TAKING THE TWO MEN, TO EMBARRASS AND DISCREDIT THE PRESIDENT. IF THE FIRST OPTIMISTIC HYPOTHESIS IS TRUE, THIS MAY BE THE LAST SORT OF INCIDENT OF ITS KIND. SHLAUDEMAN

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 2